

Section I - Executive Summary



North Fish Hatchery Road Neighborhood Center

Concept Analysis - 2016

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The **North Fish Hatchery Road Neighborhood Center Concept Analysis** project was a cooperative effort between the City of Fitchburg Planning and Zoning Department and Master's Degree candidates from the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Department of Urban and Regional Planning, and under the direction of the City of Fitchburg Parks Commission. The *Concept Analysis* project team would like to express our kindest thanks to the individuals and organizations that provided their time, expertise, and guidance to us. This project would not have been possible without their help. The project team would especially like to thank Wade Thompson, Resource/Project Planner, City of Fitchburg Planning and Zoning Department. It has been our pleasure to meet and work with Wade and we appreciated his input, guidance, and dedication. The following is a list, although not all inclusive, of those who have assisted in development of this *Concept Analysis* project.

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Abbreviations Used in the *North Fish Hatchery Road Neighborhood Center Concept Analysis*

Center: A potential North Fish Hatchery Road Neighborhood Center;

Church: Fitchburg Christian Fellowship Church;

City: City of Fitchburg;

Liaison: A potential Community Neighborhood Liaison position for
a potential North Fish Hatchery Road Neighborhood Center;

Neighborhood: The North Fish Hatchery Road Neighborhood;

NHGIS: National Historical Geographic Information System;

Nine Springs: Nine Springs Golf Course;

Report: Section II – Existing Conditions Report, *North Fish Hatchery Road Neighborhood Center Concept Analysis*;

School: Aldo Leopold Elementary School;

Services: Programs, services, and resources potentially available at a
potential North Fish Hatchery Road Neighborhood Center;

The North Fish Hatchery Road Neighborhood Center Vision

Consider, for a moment, the **North Fish Hatchery Road Neighborhood** in the Cities of Fitchburg and Madison. It has its strong points, but for all its strengths, also many limitations. Now imagine, for a moment, what the Neighborhood could be at its very best.

Consider a Neighborhood that currently has the **highest childhood obesity rate in all of Dane County**. Now, imagine one that boasts a physically active and healthy community where organized and individual sports are offered during and after school, and in summer day camps. And, imagine one where youth are encouraged to eat healthy by teaching them how to grow their own food and prepare the food to share with neighbors and friends.

Consider a Neighborhood with one of the **highest population densities in all of Dane County**, yet with all these people, street activity is scarce and language is a barrier to communication. Now, imagine one where neighbors meet for street parties, casual art events, and socials, and one that boasts a **Neighborhood Center** for community events activities and classes that teach language skills.

Consider a Neighborhood where **transportation to Fitchburg's City Hall, Community/Senior Center, and Library is limited due to distance and lack of transportation options**. Now, imagine one where various organizations, at **multiple Neighborhood Center sites**, take part in providing programs, services, and resources as normally provided at the sites identified above. And imagine that someday, in time, **one Neighborhood Center site** where residents and the broader community gather to interact on a daily basis, participating in various programs and services, and utilizing resources, that benefit the Neighborhood and the broader community.

Imagine this **Neighborhood Center.....where residents meet to better their community through public involvement** and by creating a blueprint that meets the needs of the Neighborhood and the broader community, and redefines the vocabulary and possibilities of civic engagement.



Imagine this **Neighborhood Center.....where trust and leadership is cultivated** in those who have not previously been active in civic life.

Imagine this **Neighborhood Center.....where constructive partnerships are developed among all stakeholders**, including residents, governments, businesses, and non-profit organizations, ultimately strengthening community structure and "social capital."

If you can imagine this.....you have imagined what could eventually be the **NORTH FISH HATCHERY ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER**.

Executive Summary

The City of Fitchburg, located in Dane County, Wisconsin, is approximately 35 square miles in size and boasts a diverse population of approximately 26,000, including neighborhoods with some of the lowest household incomes in the County. One such neighborhood is the North Fish Hatchery Road

Neighborhood, encompassing portions of the the Arbor Hills-Leopold Neighborhood (hereafter “Neighborhood”), located in both the City of Fitchburg and City of Madison, in one of the densest residential areas in the County. Obesity, language barriers, education gaps, and social and community disconnection are issues facing a significant proportion of Neighborhood residents.

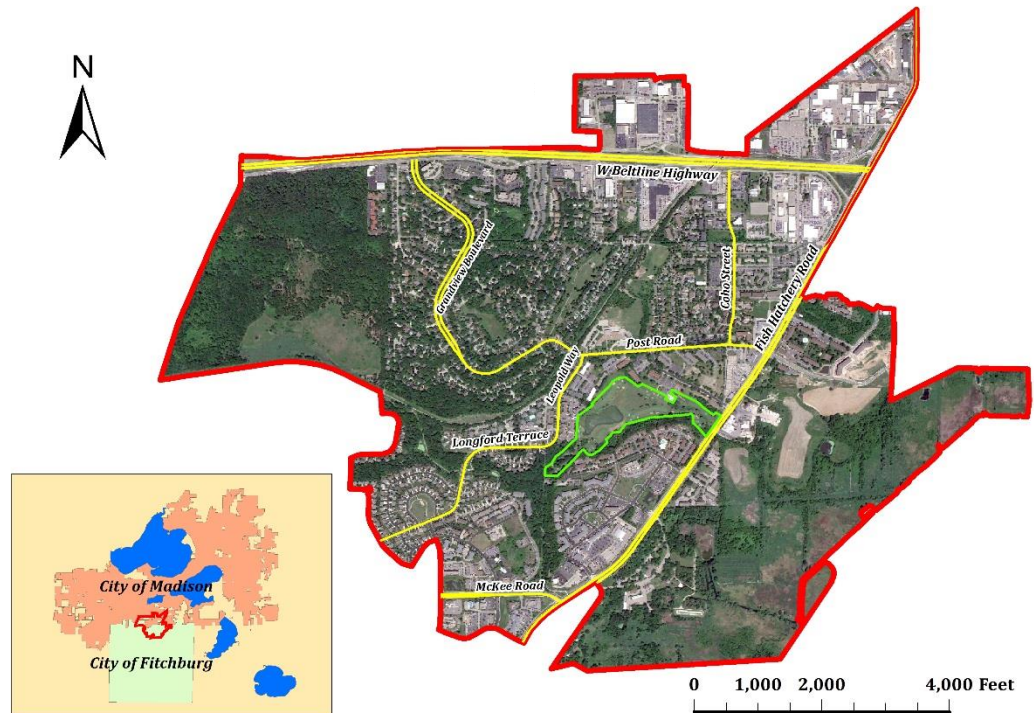
Unfortunately, access to programs, services, and resources (hereafter collectively “services”) that could benefit the Neighborhood is difficult. Various entities, both governmental and non-governmental, offer services for Neighborhood residents, but there is little coordination between the entities and services. To that end, the aforementioned entities have recently been informally discussing the idea of some sort of “Neighborhood Center” as a productive and efficient means to better address these issues and needs.

A Neighborhood Center could have a number of positive benefits and outcomes. The services to potentially be offered at a “Center” could provide avenues for education, physical activity, language and leadership skills, and foster healthier lifestyles and productive relationships.

As such, the ***North Fish Hatchery Road Neighborhood Center Concept Analysis*** consists of an initial step in development of the Neighborhood Center idea. The *Concept Analysis* was developed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Graduate Program in Urban and Regional Planning for the City of Fitchburg, and consists of the following components:

- **Section I – Executive Summary;**
- **Section II – Existing Conditions Report;**
- **Section III – Recommendations:**

The **Existing Conditions Report (Section II)** provides an overview of various information relevant to the Neighborhood Center concept, including a Neighborhood overview, previous plans/studies, stakeholder perceptions, population, services, mobility and connectivity, land use, and “issues”. **Recommendations (Section III)** were developed to address the issues identified in the Existing Conditions Report, and include both short and long-term recommendations.



Short-term recommendations are premised on **utilizing three existing sites, as follows, to provide Neighborhood Center services**:

- **Nine Springs Golf Course;**
- **Aldo Leopold Elementary School;**
- **Fitchburg Christian Fellowship Church;**

These three sites currently provide services to the Neighborhood and broader community and are located in close proximity to one another in the Neighborhood. Potential services provided at each site are based on site-specific attributes. As such, the Nine Springs Golf Course, owned by the City of Fitchburg, could provide **outdoor and recreation-focused services**, including golf, disc golf, winter activities, and community events. Aldo Leopold Elementary School, in the Madison Metropolitan School District, could provide **educationally-focused services**, including career and job search resources, and language, parenting, and “healthy lifestyle” classes. Fitchburg Christian Fellowship Church could provide **community-focused services**, including leadership development, public outreach social services, and senior programs. Additional recommendations include **branding/marketing for the three sites** to provide coordination, unification, and cohesion, promoting them as one unified Center, as well as **site monitoring** to ensure site goals and objectives are being met.



Existing Scattered Sites – Potential North Fish Hatchery Road Neighborhood Center

Nine Springs Golf Course, Aldo Leopold Elementary School, and Fitchburg Christian Fellowship Church

Source: City of Fitchburg

This “**Existing Scattered Sites**” approach is feasible in the short-term, as the three sites currently do provide some “Center-type” services, with all sites relatively accessible and located within close proximity in the Neighborhood.

Long-term recommendations are premised on developing a “**Single Site Center**” in a **centralized location** in the Neighborhood. Providing all services at a single Center site promotes sharing of resources, convenience, and financial efficiencies. Similar to the short-term Existing Scattered Sites approach, service focus of a Single Site would be premised on **Recreation, Education, and Health**.

Recommendations further state the City should explore designation of a “**Community Neighborhood Liaison**” position, in both the long and short-term. This position could coordinate activities between the three Existing Scattered Sites, engage the Neighborhood, and serve as the “face” of a Center. This position could be developed and maintained in partnership with the City of Madison, Aldo Leopold Elementary School, and other interested parties. Finally, various **funding scenarios** are explored in the Recommendations as well, to develop and sustain a Center. Implementation of the aforementioned recommendations will assist in ensuring Neighborhood needs and deficiencies are met, improving the quality of life for all City residents, and ultimately building a stronger, healthier City.